DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 376 585 EA 026 289

AUTHOR	Colopy, Kelly W.; Tarr, Hope C.
TITLE	Minnesota's Public School Choice Options.
INSTITUTION	Policy Studies Associates, Inc., Washington, DC.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Education, Washington, DC. Office of the Under Secretary.
REPORT NO	ED/OUS-94-23
PUB DATE	94
CONTRACT	LC-89089001
NOTE	44p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Access to Education; Demography; Elementary Secondary Education; *Equal Education; Free Choice Transfer Programs; Minority Groups; *Open Enrollment; *Public Schools; Rural Population; *School Choice; Urban Demography
IDENTIFIERS	*Minnesota

ABSTRACT

This document presents findings of a study that identified patterns of use among a broad array of open-enrollment options available to elementary and secondary students in Minnesota. During the period 1985-91, the Minnesota legislature passed several pieces of new legislation designed to: (1) increase the educational choices available to students, and (2) place enrollment decisions directly in the hands of students and their parents. Data were obtained from Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) files. The study addressed six research questions on trends in district-level enrollments through Minnesota's school-choice options. Findings indicate that in both Minneapolis and St. Paul, within-district choice was the mechanism most frequently used by parents. Unlike the other nine choice options, use of open enrollment was more likely to occur in smaller districts, suburban and rural districts, and higher poverty districts. Use of the school-choice options by minority students was on the rise. Minority students in the Twin Cities primarily used open enrollment and private alternative programs. Nearly 95 percent of minority students who applied to use open enrollment in 1990-91 actually enrolled in a nonresident school district in 1991-92. One figure and eight tables are included. The appendix contains a statistical table. (LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

EA

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

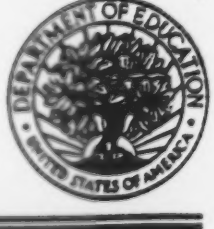
ED 376 585

Minnesota's Public School Choice Options

Prepared Under Contract by:

Policy Studies Associates, Inc.
Washington, D.C.

No. LC 89089001



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION • OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY

EA 026 289

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

MINNESOTA'S PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS

Kelly W. Colopy
Hope C. Tarr

1994

Prepared for the
U.S. Department of Education
Contract LC 89089001

This report was supported by the Planning and Evaluation Service, Office of Policy and Planning, U.S. Department of Education, under Contract LC 89089001. It does not reflect official Department policy, and no endorsement of its contents by the Department should be inferred.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the following education policy experts for contributing their time and attention to reviewing and commenting on this report:

Rolf Blank, Council of Chief State School Officers
James Coleman, University of Chicago
Joe Nathan, Humphrey Institute, University of Minnesota
Carol Weiss, Harvard Graduate School of Education
John Witte, University of Wisconsin at Madison

We also appreciate the quick response time of the Minnesota Department of Education staff, particularly Peggy Hunter, Sharon Peck, Steve Etheridge, and Bob Eliason for fulfilling our data requests. Without their cooperation, this report could not have been written.

We wish to thank staff at the U.S. Department of Education--particularly Alan Ginsburg and Joanne Wiggins--for contributing to the study design and reviewing the final product.

And finally, we would like to thank our colleagues at Policy Studies. Nancy Adelman oversaw the design of the study and served as the primary editor for the final product. Nancy Thornes and Benjamin Lagueruela contributed a substantial amount of time toward the completion of this report.

CONTENTS

Introduction 1

Overview of the Study 3

Data Sources 3

Research Questions and Key Findings 4

A Profile of Public Education in Minnesota 7

Question 1: How popular are the various choice options? Have certain options increased or decreased in popularity? 9

Question 1a: How popular are the various choice options/mechanisms in Minneapolis and St. Paul? Have certain options increased or decreased in popularity? 14

Question 2: Is the popularity of various options related to district demographic characteristics? 18

Question 3: Are minority students using the choice options? Have there been significant changes in the numbers of minority students using these choice options? 21

Question 3a: Are minority students living in Minneapolis and St. Paul using the choice options? Have there been changes in the numbers of minority students using these choice options? 25

Question 4: Do minority students who apply to use the Open Enrollment Option actually use it? 27

Appendix: Statistical Table 29

References 30

Introduction

This report focuses on patterns of use among a broad array of mechanisms through which elementary and secondary school students in Minnesota may attend school somewhere other than in the district where they reside. A number of these mechanisms involving interdistrict transfer have been available for many years and are similar to enabling statutes in other states; essentially, these mechanisms are fiscal arrangements between educational organizations, primarily school districts. In the period from 1985 through 1991, the Minnesota legislature passed into law several new pieces of legislation designed to (1) increase the educational choices available to students and (2) place enrollment decisions directly in the hands of students and their parents. Below, we describe the basic parameters of each type of enrollment option available in the state.

The Postsecondary Enrollment Option (PSEO), enacted in 1985, enables academically eligible juniors and seniors in high school to enroll in college courses prior to their graduation from high school. The program allows students to earn college credits while remaining connected to their high school communities. Because state foundation aid follows the student to the postsecondary institution, use of the Postsecondary Enrollment Option represents a net loss for school districts proportionate to the number of hours that students attend classes away from the high school.

The Open Enrollment Option allows students in grades Kindergarten through grade 12 to apply to enroll in schools located outside of their resident district. The program was first implemented on a voluntary basis in the 1987-88 school year. In 1989-90, the program became mandatory for districts with total enrollments in excess of 1,000 and, in the following year, for all districts with the exception of those operating under court-ordered desegregation plans. Applications to enroll in a nonresident district may be denied only if space is unavailable.

The High School Graduation Incentive Program (HSGI), enacted in 1987, provides students who are otherwise "at risk" of dropping out of high school (e.g., due to poor academic performance, behavior problems, pregnancy) with opportunities to complete the necessary course work for graduation. Through HSGI, eligible students may, by their own choice, transfer to schools or programs that meet their particular educational and/or social needs. Their choices include another regular high school; public or private nonsectarian alternative programs; a college or technical institute under PSEO (described above); or an Area Learning Center.

The Area Learning Centers, also enacted in 1987, are designed as a specific choice for the at-risk population identified under HSGI. The centers, which are dispersed around the state, provide individualized programs that focus on academics and workforce preparation. The centers offer year-round, flexible programming and tailored instruction, training, and work experience opportunities to the individual

student. Students may earn a diploma from either their home district or the district where the center is located.

Charter Public Schools, the newest choice option in Minnesota, are locally designed and operated schools that contract with a school district to improve student achievement. The charter school legislation in Minnesota authorizes up to 20 of these schools, which must be approved by both state and local boards of education. The schools are exempted from most state rules and regulations. By the end of 1993, eight charter schools had been approved.

School Board Agreements are a traditional mechanism for placing students in a nonresident school district. Students and their families are likely to be involved in the decision to send a child out of district under this mechanism, but the transfer decisionmaking power rests with the two involved school boards. School Board Agreements are used for a variety of reasons and involve negotiated agreements that allow students to transfer between districts, usually on a case-by-case basis.

Tuition Agreements allow students to attend school in a nonresident district while continuing to maintain formal enrollment in their resident district. Tuition Agreements specify procedures for compensation of the nonresident district, either through state funding or through district- or parent-paid tuition.

Enrollment Choice for Eleventh- and Twelfth-Graders (ENR) is a grandfather clause that allows eleventh- and twelfth-grade students whose families have moved into another district to complete high school in their current school rather than transferring to a school in the district of their new residence.

Public and Private Alternative Programs are "second chance" programs for at-risk students. Generally, these programs offer a small school atmosphere and a personalized approach to education. The Public Alternatives Programs are administered by a school district and receive the state foundation aid associated with each student enrolled. The Private Alternative Programs are also funded through state education foundation aid but are administered by nonsectarian organizations outside of the public school district. Public and Private Alternative Programs are similar in operation to Area Learning Centers. They are located primarily in urban areas.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) collects data annually on the numbers of students using both the traditional and the newer mechanisms for enrolling in nonresident districts and schools that have been described above. In addition to these cross-district programs, a number of Minnesota districts offer within-district choice options. These options, which include magnet schools, specialty schools, and schools with specific educational philosophies, enrich the choices available to students and families in a limited number of localities. However, because they are viewed as an important part of the overall picture of educational choice in Minnesota, we have included use of within-district options in some of our analyses.

Overview of the Study

Previous evaluation reports have provided early documentation on the impact of the Open Enrollment Program in Minnesota (Minnesota House of Representatives Research Department Working Paper #1, 1991; Rubenstein et al., 1992). This report makes three contributions to the growing body of literature. First, it examines trends in the use of interdistrict Open Enrollment relative to the use of the other school choice mechanisms available to students in Minnesota. This allows for a realistic examination of each option/mechanism without exaggerating its effect on the education climate of the state. Second, the report places school choice options in their statewide context by using the total population of participating Minnesota school districts to examine trends in district enrollments across years. The latter enables us to describe, rather than merely to estimate, the actual long-term effects of the various enrollment option statutes. Finally, the report provides district-level data that can be used as a baseline for future enrollment comparisons.

Data Sources

Data for this study come from Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) files. The state collects and compiles data on district characteristics and use of enrollment options annually. Specific state data files used in the analysis included:

- Data for 1989-90, 1990-91, and 1991-92 on the demographic characteristics of each district (district size, urbanicity, wealth/poverty, and minority enrollment)
- Data for 1990-91 and 1991-92 on the numbers and percentages of students, by district, who enrolled through each of the enrollment options/mechanisms

Data specific to Open Enrollment were obtained through the following sources:

- An MDE database containing a district head count of students who used Open Enrollment to enter and/or leave their resident district through 1990-91;
- MDE application data files, which contain records on students applying for transfers through Open Enrollment for 1989-90, 1990-91, and 1991-92. These records include data on student race/ethnicity and grade. Students who applied after the January deadline (an increasingly common occurrence) are not included in these totals. In addition, students who live in districts under desegregation orders are not required to abide by the January application deadline; therefore these data may underrepresent actual use of the Open Enrollment Option by urban and minority groups.

Research Questions and Key Findings

The available data were used to address six research questions on trends in district-level enrollments through Minnesota's school choice options. The questions and key findings for each follow:

Question 1: How popular are the various choice options? Have certain options increased or decreased in popularity?

- Overall, 11 percent of students in 1990-91 and 13 percent of students in 1991-92 chose the school they were attending. However, these numbers are somewhat exaggerated because they include Minneapolis and St. Paul where students are required to choose schools at different grade levels. When the Twin Cities are removed, 3 percent of students in 1990-91 and 4 percent of students in 1991-92 chose the school they were attending.

- Within-District Choice was the most popular school choice option. However, 95 percent of the students using Within-District Choice to select a school live in Minneapolis and St. Paul where students are required to choose schools at different grade levels.

- When the Twin Cities are removed from the analysis, Open Enrollment followed by Postsecondary Enrollment Options and School Board Agreements emerge as the most frequently used mechanisms for choosing a school. Between 1990-91 and 1991-92, enrollments through these three choice options increased substantially. The use of Open Enrollment increased by 34 percent, School Board Agreements by 28 percent, and Postsecondary Enrollment Options by 17 percent.

- Use of Area Learning Centers and High School Graduation Incentives also increased noticeably--17 percent and 18 percent respectively. Increases in the use of these two choice options for at-risk students may indicate one of two trends: (1) more students are at risk of dropping out of high school, so the enrollments in these programs is increasing, or (2) at-risk students are becoming more aware of their options and are taking advantage of programs that better serve their needs.

Question 1a: How popular are the various choice options/mechanisms in Minneapolis and St. Paul?[1] Have certain options increased or decreased in popularity?

- In both Minneapolis and St. Paul, Within-District Choice was the mechanism most used by parents to choose a school for their children. The primary reason for this high level (86 percent and 78 percent respectively) of participation is that the two districts require students' families to choose schools at different grade levels. In Minneapolis, parents are required to choose a school for their child in both elementary and high school, while St. Paul requires high school students to choose the school they will attend. In addition, St. Paul offers a choice of 30 magnet programs in grades K-8. After Within-District Choice, Postsecondary Enrollment Options followed by Open Enrollment and School Board Agreements were the most popular school choice options.

Question 2: Is the popularity of various options related to district demographic characteristics?

- Unlike the other nine choice options, use of Open Enrollment is more likely to occur in smaller districts, suburban and rural districts, and in higher poverty districts (i.e., districts where high percentages of students are eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch). In comparison, the use of High School Graduation Incentives, Area Learning Centers, Within-District Choice, and Public Alternative Programs is more likely to occur in larger districts, and use of Within-District Choice and ENR Choice (grandfathering) is more likely to occur in urban areas.[2]

---

[1] Minnesota has five urban areas, of which three--Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth--operate under court-ordered desegregation plans to achieve racial balance in their schools. Because of the court orders, they have held special status under the statewide Open Enrollment Option, reserving the right to deny students' applications to enter or exit the district if racial balance would be disturbed. In addition, reliable data on student use of the various choice options for Minneapolis and St. Paul have been difficult to obtain. For these reasons, we have chosen to present the analysis of trends in the urban areas separately from analyses of the state's suburban and rural districts. Because Duluth resembles the rest of the state in terms of minority enrollment, free- and reduced-price lunch participation, and use of the school choice mechanisms, it has been included in the overall state analysis.

[2] Only the use of Open Enrollment bore a significant relationship to all three demographic characteristics.

Question 3: Are minority students using the choice options? Have there been significant changes in the numbers of minority students using these choice options?

- Use of the school choice options by minority students is on the rise, increasing by 400 students from 1990-91 to 1991-92. Available data[3] indicate that, statewide, minority students and their families choose the school they will attend at the same rate as white students and families (about 2 percent). In fact, a greater percentage of minority students use School Board Agreements than do white students (2 percent in comparison with 1 percent in 1991).

- When looking only at those districts where minority students actually use a specific option, the proportion of minority students using each option increases substantially. In these districts, School Board Agreements and Open Enrollment are used most often by minority students. In 1991-92, an average of 13 percent of minority students in 69 districts used School Board Agreements to change districts compared with 5 percent of white students in those districts. The Open Enrollment Option was used by an average of 9 percent of minority students in 16 school districts compared with 4 percent of white students in those districts.

Question 3a: Are minority students living in Minneapolis and St. Paul using the choice options? Have there been changes in the numbers of minority students using these choice options?

- Minority students in the Twin Cities primarily use Open Enrollment and Private Alternative Programs to choose schools[4]. Open Enrollment is the only options mechanism that experienced an increase in minority participation between 1990-91 and 1991-92 in the two urban areas.

Question 4: Do minority students who apply to use the Open Enrollment Option actually enroll in a nonresident school district?

- Due to peculiarities in the state's data collection methods, students residing in districts with desegregation plans (e.g., the Twin Cities) are not required to abide by the state application deadline. Therefore, the number of minority students who apply to use Open Enrollment may be underrepresented in the state's application database. However, it appears, based on this data, that nearly 95 percent of minority students

---

[3] This discussion refers only to minority student use of Open Enrollment, School Board Agreements, Tuition Agreements, High School Graduation Incentives, ENR Choice, and Private Alternative Programs. Data on minority student enrollments through Within-District Choice, Area Learning Centers, Post Secondary Enrollment Options, and Public Alternative Programs were not available for this report.

[4] Ibid.

who applied to use Open Enrollment in 1990-91 actually enrolled in a nonresident school district in 1991-92.

The body of this report is organized around the research questions. However, before moving into the detailed analyses, we offer a profile of public education in Minnesota as a context for examining trends in the use of its many educational choice options.

A Profile of Public Education in Minnesota

Like many midwestern states, Minnesota has a large number of small school districts and a strong tradition of local control of education. Geographically, the state is largely rural with population density around the Twin Cities, and to a lesser extent, Duluth. Table 1 summarizes some basic education statistics for the state. In the table and throughout the report, the information presented does not include data for vocational/technical centers and intermediate districts.

Statewide Enrollment: Total statewide enrollment reflects the head count data provided annually by each district. Statewide enrollment has increased by approximately 4 percent (from 732,332 to 760,536) between 1989-90 and 1991-92. The collective effects of school district consolidations, redistricting, and the dissolution of some smaller, rural districts have resulted in slight fluctuations in the total number of districts in the state for each school year (Refer to Table 1).

District Size: District size--the number of students enrolled in the district--reflects the head count data for a given year. The average district size increased by approximately 1 percent between 1989-90 and 1990-91 and by 4 percent the following year. Over the three-year period, the average district enrollment grew from 1,711 students to 1,810.

Urbanicity: Urban status of districts and the distribution across the districts has remained fairly constant over the past three years. Although only 1 percent of districts are urban, these districts represent 15 percent of students. On the other hand, nearly three- quarters of the districts are rural while only 36 percent of students live in these districts. The urban areas include the Twin

Table 1: Summary of Education Statistics for Minnesota						
	1989-90		1990-91		1991-92	
Number of Districts[5]	428		434		420	
Statewide Enrollment	732,332		755,510		760,536	
District Size						
Average	1,711		1,741		1,810	
Range	60 - 40,324		25 - 41,050		30 - 41,597	
Urbanicity[6]	Districts	Students	Districts	Students	Districts	Students
Urban	1%	15%	1%	15%	1%	15%
Suburban	23%	49%	23%	49%	23%	49%
Rural	76%	36%	76%	36%	76%	36%
Wealth/Poverty % eligible for free or reduced-price lunch	21% of student population (151,552 students)		22% of student population (162,496 students)		23% of student population (176,948 students)	
Statewide Minority Enrollment	n/a		10%		10%	

Sources: MDE District and School Enrollment by Ethnicity (1989-90, 1990-91, 1991-92). MINCRIS[7] Lunch Participation (1989-90, 1990-91, 1991-92).

Cities--Minneapolis and St. Paul. Because of their heavy urbanization and because they are under desegregation plans[8], Minneapolis and St. Paul constitute anomalies in a predominantly rural state. Consequently, selected analyses in this report examine enrollments separately for these two districts.

---

[5] The number of district do not include vocational/technical centers and intermediate districts.

[6] Data based on 1990-91 rating of urbanicity.

[7] The MDE computer data base system.

[8] Duluth is also urban and under a desegregation plan, yet its population resembles the remainder of the state in terms of minority population, free- and reduced-price lunch participation, and use of school choice options. Therefore, Duluth has been included in the overall state analysis of school choice options.

Wealth/Poverty: District wealth/poverty is based on the number of students in the district who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch programs. The percentage of students eligible for these programs increased slightly each year: 21 percent in 1989-90, 22 percent in 1990-91, and 23 percent in 1991-92.

Minority Enrollment:[9] MDE's district head count data for 1989-90 do not provide information on the race/ethnicity of students enrolled. However, as of 1990-91, these data are available from the majority of districts. For both 1990-91 and 1991-92, minority students accounted for approximately 10 percent of all students enrolled in the state. The minority head count for 1991-92 is based on data provided by 402 (94 percent) of the total 434 operating districts in the state.

Question 1: How popular are the various choice options? Have certain options increased or decreased in popularity?

Tables 2a and 2b on pages 12 and 13 display the number of students using each of the Minnesota options for changing districts or schools. These tables provide data on only those districts with students who have exercised school choice. Each table represents option use for a single year.

In 1990-91, Within-District Choice was the most popular school choice option. However, 95 percent of the students using Within-District Choice to select a school live in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Minneapolis requires that students in elementary and high school choose their schools, but in St. Paul, only high school students are required to choose a school. In addition, St. Paul offers an extensive array of magnet school programs for grades K-8. When the Twin Cities are removed from the analysis, Postsecondary Enrollment Options followed by Open Enrollment and School Board Agreements emerge as the most utilized mechanisms for choosing a school. Between 1990-91 and 1991-92, use of these three programs increased substantially (14 percent, 46 percent, and 32 percent respectively); use of Open Enrollment increased by almost half. Open Enrollment and Postsecondary Enrollment Options are still relatively new programs, and awareness of their availability may not yet

[9] In this report, minority students are defined as those students whose reported race/ethnicity is other than "White, Caucasian." Minority students thus include students representing the following categories: African American or Black; American Indian; Asian, including Hawaiian and Pacific Islander; Hispanic; and Other.

Table 2a: Students Using Each Enrollment Option, 1990-1991[10]						
Option	**Number of Districts**	**Average District Size**	**Average Percent of Students in Each District Using the Option**	**Range of Percents**	**Total Number of Students Using the Option**	**Percent of School Population**
Within-District Choice	8	17,399	23%	3%-86%	63,065	9%
Postsecondary Enrollment Options	291	2,396	1%	0%-10%	6,534	1%
Open Enrollment	329	2,122	2%	0%-20%	5,794	1%
School Board Agreements	235	2,650	2%	0%-91%	4,481	1%
Area Learning Centers	19	7,352	2%	0%-6%	2,358	0%
High School Graduation Incentives	68	5,127	1%	0%-7%	1,312	0%
Private Alternative Programs	10	9,195	1%	0%-2%	1,034	0%
Enrollment Choice	110	4,434	0%	0%-1%	563	0%
Tuition Agreements	40	1,151	1%	0%-3%	146	0%
Other Public Alternative Programs	10	4,515	2%	1%-4%	642	0%
Statewide Enrollment	377[11]	1,938				

Source: MDE School District Options Report by Ethnicity (1990-91, 1991-92).

[10] Data does not include vocational/technical centers and intermediate districts.

[11] Number of districts that have students using at least one of the choice options.

Table 2b: Students Using Each Enrollment Option, 1991-1992

Option	Number of Districts	Average District Size	Average Percent of Students in Each District Using the Option	Range of Percents	Total Number of Students Using the Option	Percent of School Population	Percent Change, 1990-1991
Within-District Choice	11	13,966	19%	0%-86%	66,394	9%	5%
Open Enrollment	360	2,016	2%	0%-55%	8,454	1%	46%
Postsecondary Enrollment Options	306	2,353	1%	0%-9%	7,467	1%	14%
School Board Agreements	247	2,514	3%	0%-64%	5,931	1%	32%
Area Learning Centers	23	8,163	3%	0%-7%	3,237	0%	23%[12]
High School Graduation Incentives	62	5,770	1%	0%-5%	1,399	0%	7%
Other Public Alternative Programs	17	7,247	1%	0%-4%	1,345	0%	4%[13]
Private Alternative Programs	9	10,187	1%	0%-3%	1,063	0%	3%
Enrollment Choice	100	4,603	0%	0%-1%	585	0%	4%
Tuition Agreements	30	2,120	0%	0%-2%	92	0%	-37%
Statewide Enrollment	387[14]	1,939					

Source: MDE School District Options Report by Ethnicity (1990-91, 1991-92).

---

[12] In 1990, data were not available for six Area Learning Center sites. In 1991, these sites accounted for 329 students. These students were subtracted from the 1991 numbers to determine the percentage change in usage of Area Learning Centers.

[13] In 1990, data were not available for six Public Alternative Programs. In 1992, these sites accounted for 677 students. These students were subtracted from the 1991 numbers to determine the percent change in use of Public Alternative Programs.

[14] Number of districts who have students using at least one of the choice options.

have peaked. As families become better informed, the use of these options may continue to increase. The increased use of School Board Agreements may also be tied to the new focus on the Open Enrollment Option; parents who are seeking to send their children to a school in another district may decide to use the School Board Agreements if they have missed the Open Enrollment application deadline or if for some other reason the School Board Agreement process is more convenient for them.

Area Learning Centers also experienced a large increase (23 percent). Over one-third (9 percent) of this increase is due to a new center located in St. Paul. As new centers continue to open around the state, Area Learning Center enrollments will continue to grow.

A true longitudinal analysis of district enrollment trends requires that we examine enrollments in those districts that can be traced from 1990-91 and 1991-92. Of the 377 districts that had students using one of the choice options in 1990-91, 356[15] districts (94 percent) could be traced into the 1991-92 school year.[16] For 1990-91, the 356 districts accounted for 646,071 students or 86 percent of the statewide enrollment; in 1991-92, they accounted for 658,098 students or 87 percent of the statewide enrollment.

To determine the extent to which enrollment trends within these 356 districts may be generalized to the state as a whole, Table 3 reports on their demographic characteristics relative to all districts in the state. The 356 districts are generally representative of statewide district enrollment, urbanicity, and wealth; the choice districts are slightly larger and more suburban than the statewide average.

Table 4a and 4b present participation data for each of the ten choice options in the 356 districts that could be tracked from 1990-91 and 1991-92. Use of several of the newer options--particularly Open Enrollment--increased noticeably during this time frame, as did use of the more traditional School Board Agreements (see the last column of Table 4b). The increased use of Open Enrollment and School Board Agreements indicates that attending schools in other districts is becoming more popular. To the extent that Tuition Agreements have previously allowed families to

---

[15] Participation in these districts could not be tracked from 1990-91 to 1991-92 because data on student participation in the choice programs in these districts were not available.

[16] The actual number is 358, but because Minneapolis and St. Paul operate under court-ordered desegregation plans and their policies with regard to family use of Open Enrollment have fluctuated, these two districts have been removed from the analysis. For further information on the state's urban districts, see section on Question 1a. In addition, the data available for some of the choice options come from different sources and cannot be tracked from year to year.

pay for their children to attend school in a nonresident district, the significant decrease in the use of this option may reflect increasing knowledge of the Open Enrollment Option as a mechanism for changing districts without direct costs to the family. Increases in the use of High School Graduation Incentives and Area Learning Centers, both programs for "at-risk" students, most likely indicate that at-risk students are becoming more aware of their options and are taking advantage of programs that better serve their needs, although there is also the possibility that the proportion of at-risk students in the state is increasing overall.

Table 3: Comparison of the Demographics of the 356 Districts and the State[17]

	1990-91				1991-92			
	State (n=432)		Choice Districts[18]		State (n=418)		Choice Districts	
District Size								
Range	25 - 34,524		25 - 34,524		30 - 35,472		30 - 35,472	
Average	1,570		1,805		1,638		1,838	
Urbanicity[19]	District	Student	District	Student	District	Student	District	Student
Urban	1%	5%	1%	5%	1%	5%	1%	6%
Suburban	27%	54%	27%	56%	27%	54%	27%	56%
Rural	73%	40%	73%	39%	73%	40%	73%	38%
Wealth/Poverty (% eligible for free/reduced-price lunch)	18%		18%		20%		20%	
Minority Enrollment	5%		5%		6%		6%	

Source: MDE District & School Enrollment by Ethnicity (1990-91 and 1991-92). MINCRIS[20] Lunch Participation (1990-91, 1991-92).

---

[17] The state figures exclude Minneapolis and St. Paul since they have been excluded from the overall analysis for the choice options. These districts will be discussed separately.

[18] Districts that have at least one student participating in at least one choice option. The 356 districts represent those districts where student participation in the choice options could be tracked from 1990-91 to 1991-92.

[19] Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding error.

[20] The MDE computer data base system.

Table 4b also shows that in the nine districts where it is available, Within-District Choice is increasing in popularity as districts continue to open new specialized schools or programs within their own boundaries. In 1991-91, three districts opened new programs, accounting for 4 percent of the increase in students' use of the Within-District option.

The largest percentage decline (53 percent) in program use was for Private Alternative Programs. Historically, this program has had the fewest number of participants (60 in 1990-91 and 29 in 1991-92) and the decline may indicate a shift in use to other publicly funded programs.

Question 1a: How popular are the various choice options/mechanisms in Minneapolis and St. Paul? Have certain options increased or decreased in popularity?

Reliable data on Minneapolis and St. Paul are difficult to obtain. During the three years of our study of Open Enrollment and other choice options, little comparable data have been uncovered. For this reason, data on Minneapolis and St. Paul have been removed from the discussion of trends in the use of the choice options as these data would distort the numbers and findings. The available data on the Twin Cities are discussed below. Footnotes indicate where data may be suspect.

Table 5 provides demographic information on the students living in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Collectively, the two districts account for 10 percent of the state's total student enrollment and for the bulk of its minority enrollment. The percentage of students in Minneapolis and St. Paul who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch is more than twice that for the state overall.

Table 6 provides data on the number and percentage of students in each district who have used the ten options in 1990-91 and 1991-92. The policies and circumstances regarding choice options vary for these two urban districts, as described below.

Table 4a: Students Using Each Enrollment Option, 1990-91

(In those districts that could be tracked from 1990-91 to 1991-92)[21]

Option	Number of Districts[22]	Average District Size	Average Percent of Students in Each District Using the Option	Range of Percents	Total Number of Students Using the Option	Percent of School Population
Open Enrollment	312	1,969	2%	0%-20%	5,425	1%
Postsecondary Enrollment Options	279	2,202	1%	0%-10%	5,397	1%
School Board Agreements	226	2,398	2%	0%-91%	4,391	1%
Within-District Choice	6	10,369	6%	3%-9%	3,580	1%
Area Learning Centers	18	5,479	2%	0%-6%	1,989	0%
High School Graduation Incentives	66	4,712	1%	0%-4%	1,174	0%
Other Public Alternative Programs	10	4,514	2%	0%-4%	642	0%
Enrollment Choice	105	3,886	0%	0%-1%	497	0%
Tuition Agreements	39	1,154	0%	0%-3%	136	0%
Private Alternative Programs	7	2,099	0%	0%-1%	60	0%

Source: MDE School District Options Report by Ethnicity (1990-91, 1991-92).

[21] These districts do not include vocational/technical centers, intermediate districts, or the Twin Cities.

[22] The total number of districts that could be tracked is 356; they include 85 percent of the state's total enrollment.

Table 4b: Students Using Each Enrollment Option, 1991-92

(In those districts that could be tracked from 1990-91 to 1991-92)[23]

Option	Number of Districts[24]	Average District Size	Average Percent of Students in Each District Using the Option	Range of Percents	Total Number of Students Using the Option	Percent Change 1990 to 1991
Open Enrollment	330	1,917	2%	0%-55%	7,280	34%
Postsecondary Enrollment Options	292	2,165	1%	0%-9%	6,338	17%
School Board Agreements	238	2,393	2%	0%-64%	5,632	28%
Within-District Choice	9	8,640	5%	0%-9%	4,082	14%
Area Learning Centers	20	5,550	3%	0%-7%	2,492	17%[25]
High School Graduation Incentives	60	4,698	1%	0%-5%	1,388	18%
Other Public Alternative Programs	17	7,247	0%	0%-4%	1,345	4%[26]
Enrollment Choice	96	3,923	0%	0%-1%	472	-5%
Tuition Agreements	29	1,937	0%	0%-2%	89	-35%
Private Alternative Programs	7	2,260	1%	0%-3%	29	-52%

Source: MDE School District Options Report by Ethnicity (1990-91, 1991-92).

---

[23] These districts do not include vocational/technical centers, intermediate districts, or the Twin Cities.

[24] The total number of districts that could be tracked is 356; they include 86 percent of the state's total enrollment.

[25] In 1990, data were not available for six Area Learning Center sites. In 1991, these sites accounted for 163 students who were subtracted from the 1991 figure to determine the percent difference in usage.

[26] In 1990, data were not available for six Public Alternative Programs. In 1992, these sites accounted for 677 students. These students were subtracted from the 1991 numbers to determine the percent difference in usage.

Table 5: Demographic Characteristics of Minnesota's Urban Districts, 1990-91 and 1991-92		
	1990-91	**1991-92**
Minneapolis		
District Size	41,050	41,597
% Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	47%	52%
Minority Enrollment	21,243 (52%)	22,249 (53%)
St. Paul		
District Size	35,932	34,265
% Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	52%	52%
Minority Enrollment	15,594 (43%)	15,484 (45%)

Minneapolis: In Minneapolis, parents are required to choose a school for their child in both elementary and secondary school; only in middle school does the district assign a school. Because of this, 86 percent of students choose a school within the district.[27] The other choice programs are used much less frequently. The Private Alternative Programs emerged as the second most popular option in Minneapolis, enrolling 872 students in 1990 and 879 students in 1991, followed by the Postsecondary Enrollment Options (612 in 1990, 604 in 1991). Open Enrollment and Area Learning Centers experienced the greatest growth in usage. Only 22 students enrolled through Open Enrollment due to policies associated with the district's desegregation plan that prohibited white students from using Open Enrollment to transfer out of the district and restricted minority students from transferring into the district. By 1991-92, although the desegregation plan remained in place, district policies changed to allow all students the opportunity to transfer under Open Enrollment. Use of Area Learning Centers increased by 29 percent during the two-year period.

St. Paul: Like Minneapolis, St. Paul requires high school students to exercise school choice, but the district does not require families to choose schools for elementary students. In addition to the neighborhood schools for elementary and middle school students, St. Paul offers a choice of 30

[27] For more information on the Minneapolis and St. Paul within-district choice options, see Rubenstein et al., 1992, pages 4-5.

magnet programs in grades K-8 from which families can choose. Given the number of magnet schools and the high school choice requirement, 68 percent of St. Paul families in 1990 and 78 percent of St. Paul families in 1991 chose a school for their children. The large increase in participation is due to the availability of 5 new magnet programs, with a combined enrollment of nearly 1,200 students. Postsecondary Enrollment Options are the second most popular choice program (453 students in 1990, 419 students in 1991) followed by Open Enrollment. Although it, too, operates under a court-ordered desegregation plan, St. Paul--in contrast to Minneapolis--did not restrict white students from leaving or minority students from entering the district through the statewide Open Enrollment Option. Use of Open Enrollment in this city grew by 62 percent from 1990-91 to 1991-92. St. Paul opened an additional choice option in 1991-92--a new Area Learning Center that served 222 students in 1991-92.

Question 2: Is the popularity of various options related to district demographic characteristics?

In both 1990 and 1991, Open Enrollment was the only choice option that bore a significant relationship to all three district demographic characteristics (district total enrollment, urbanicity, and poverty level) available from MDE's databases. Seven other programs were significantly related to one or more of the demographic characteristics. Using the 356 districts that could be tracked from 1990-91 to 1991-92,[28] we ran correlations between the percentage of students in each district who used each choice option and district total enrollment, district urbanicity, and district poverty index (based on the percentage of students in each district who were eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch). The results of these correlations are summarized below (See Appendix for coefficients):

[28] Because of data problems and district policy changes, Minneapolis and St. Paul are not included in this analysis.

Table 6: Average Number of District Enrollments by Choice Option/Mechanism for Minneapolis and St. Paul: 1990-91 and 1991-92[29]

Metro Area Districts	Open Enrollment		Postsecondary Enrollment Options		High School Graduation Incentives		School Board Agreements		Area Learning Centers		Enrollment Choice		Within-District Choice		Private Alternative Programs	
	1990	1991	1990	1991	1990	1991	1990	1991	1990	1991	1990	1991	1990	1991	1990	1991
Minneapolis																
# of Students	22	478	612	604	0	7	47	9	369	475	2	52	35,216	35,704	872	879
% Enrollment	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	86	86	2	2
St. Paul																
# of Students	293	476	453	419	10	4	18	n/a	0	222	51	47	24,269	26,608	100	155
% Enrollment	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	n/a	0	1	0	0	68	78	0	0

Source: MDE School District Options Report by Ethnicity (1990-91, 1991-92).

** No students in these metropolitan districts used Tuition Agreements or Public Alternative Programs.

[29] In 1991-92, St. Paul was late in reporting student participation, by option, to the state. For this reason, the 1990-91 and 1991-92 data do not come from the same sources, and may not be a perfect match for Open Enrollment, High School Graduation Incentives, School Board Agreements, and Enrollment Choice. The 1990-91 data are a headcount taken at the beginning of the school year; the 1991-92 data are the average daily attendance for the year. These numbers should be considered an estimate of general trends in program use. Data on Private Alternative Programs, Postsecondary Enrollment Options, Area Learning Centers, and Within-District Choice were taken from the same data sources and can be compared.

District Size: For 1990 and 1991, student enrollments through Open Enrollment, High School Graduation Incentives, Area Learning Centers, Within-District Choice, and Public Alternative Programs (1991 only) were significantly related to district size. The use of Open Enrollment was more likely to occur in smaller districts, and use of the other programs was more likely to occur in larger districts. On the whole, the larger districts are urban and suburban and are more likely to (1) offer magnet and special programs for Within-District choice, (2) have the facilities for Area Learning Centers and High School Graduation Incentives programs, and (3) have better public transportation systems that allow students to commute within the district or to other districts without relying on parents. Open Enrollment may be more popular among smaller districts, which tend to be rural, and outer suburban districts, for the simple reason that interdistrict transfer is the only reasonable choice option available to families.

Urbanicity: In 1990 and 1991, the relationship between the urbanicity of a school district and student enrollments through Open Enrollment, Within-District Choice, and ENR Choice was significant. Use of Open Enrollment was more likely to occur in suburban and rural areas than in urban areas. Only 1 percent of Open Enrollment use occurred in urban areas compared to 48 percent in suburban districts and 51 percent in rural districts. In contrast to Open Enrollment, use of Within-District Choice and ENR Choice (grandfathering) are more likely to occur in suburban or urban districts. Nearly half (43 percent) of Within-District Choice takes place in urban areas and 55 percent in suburban areas. Use of ENR Choice is centered in the suburban areas (80 percent). Urban districts in Minnesota tend to offer a large number of educational options within the districts, so students are less likely to use Open Enrollment to transfer out of the district. Instead, students use Within-District Choice to achieve their educational goals. On the other hand, schools in small, rural districts are less likely to have full academic and extracurricular programs; rural students may use Open Enrollment to attend schools in other districts that offer these programs. In addition, a school in another rural district may be located closer to a student's home than the assigned school, making it more convenient to attend the school in the other district. Suburban students may use Open Enrollment to attend magnet programs in the urban districts, or to attend schools in other suburban areas that better meet the student's needs. ENR Choice is likely used among suburban families who move among the suburban districts, but prefer their teenager to complete his or her program at the previous school.

District Wealth: In 1990, use of a particular enrollment option was related to district wealth for only two options--Open Enrollment and Postsecondary Enrollment Options. For these options, enrollments were more likely to occur in higher poverty districts (i.e., districts in which relatively more students were eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch programs) than in lower poverty districts.

By 1991, Open Enrollment use continued to be strongly related to district wealth, but the Postsecondary Enrollment Option no longer was. For some reason, use of ENR Choice (grandfathering) showed a strong relationship to district wealth in this year. However, in contrast to Open Enrollment, ENR Choice is more likely to be used in low poverty districts than in high poverty districts. These connections are in line with those discussed in the "Urbanicity" section above. In Minnesota, poorer districts tend to be rural,[30] and students in rural areas are more likely to use Open Enrollment. Wealthier districts tend to be suburban, and students in suburban areas were more likely to use ENR Choice.

Question 3: Are minority students using the choice options? Have there been significant changes in the numbers of minority students using these choice options?

Minority student use of the choice options is on the rise, increasing by 400 students from 1990-91 to 1991-92. Of those districts where students participate in the choice mechanisms, 108 of 356[31] (39 percent) districts reported minority use of at least one option in 1991-92 compared with 90 of 356 (31 percent) districts in 1990-91. Data on minority student enrollment in Within-District Choice, Area Learning Centers, Postsecondary Enrollment Options, and Public Alternative Programs were not available for this report. However, available data indicate that, statewide, minority students and families chose-- using one of the six choice options for which we have data--the school they attended at about the same rate as white students and families (2.0 percent minority to 1.8 percent white in 1990 and 2.6 percent minority to 2.2 percent white in 1991).

In both 1990 and 1991, on average, fewer than 1 percent of both white and minority student populations enrolled in school using High School Graduation Incentives, Open Enrollment, Tuition Agreements, ENR Choice, or Private Alternative Programs. In 1990, minority students were more likely to use School Board Agreements to transfer to a school outside their district than were white

---

[30] On average, 29 percent of students living in rural districts are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch compared with 22 percent in urban areas and 15 percent in suburban areas. In addition, all districts with more than 50 percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch are rural.

[31] As in previous analyses, these data do not include the Twin Cities.

students (1 percent to 0 percent). The use of School Board Agreements increased slightly for both minority and white students in 1991, with minority students continuing to use the option more often than white students.

If we limit the analysis to only those districts where minority students actually used each of the six options programs for which we have data, the average percentage of participating minority students increases substantially (see Tables 7a and 7b). School Board Agreements and Open Enrollment are used most often by minority students. By 1991-92, an average of 13 percent of minority students in 69 districts used School Board Agreements; 9 percent of minority students in 60 districts used Open Enrollment. Still focusing on districts where minority students actually used a specific choice option, we find that the use of School Board Agreements increased by 46 percent between 1990-91 and 1991-92 and the use of the Open Enrollment Option increased by 43 percent. Although state data show that fewer than 20 districts have students who enrolled through the High School Graduation Incentives program, comparison of Tables 7a and 7b shows the number of minority students using this option doubled (from 43 to 88 students) between 1990-91 and 1991-92.

Tables 7a and 7b also indicate that in those districts where minority students actually used each of the options, they are equally likely or more likely than white students to use each option. The difference is particularly large for School Board Agreements (6 percent in 1990) and grew by 1991 (8 percent). Differences between minority and white participation also grew between the two years for Open Enrollment, High School Graduation Incentives, and Private Alternative Programs.

Table 7a: Minority Enrollment in the Six Choice Options, 1990-91

(Only districts where minority students actually used an option)

Option	Number of Districts	Average District Size	Average Minority Enrollment	Average Percent of Minority Students in Each District Using the Option	Range of Percents	Total Number of Minority Students Using the Option	Average Percent of White Students in Each District Using the Option
School Board Agreements	51	4,732	371	11%	0-100%[32]	388	5%
Open Enrollment	53	4,619	344	6%	0-66%	198	3%
High School Graduation Incentives	18	4,175	311	1%	0-3%	43	1%
Enrollment Choice	19	8,553	739	2%	0-25%	36	1%
Tuition Agreements	2	1,089	44	14%	1-27%	4	0%
Private Alternative Programs	2	4,972	254	1%	0-1%	2	0%

Source: MDE School District Options Report by Ethnicity (1990-91, 1991-91). Data do not include the Twin Cities.

[32] The 100 percent represents a district which has only two minority students enrolled, and those students are enrolled through School Board Agreements.

Table 7b: Minority Enrollment in the Six Choice Options, 1991-92

(Only districts where minority students actually used an option)

Option	Number of Districts	Average District Size	Average Minority Enrollment	Average Percent of Minority Students in Each District Using the Option	Range of Percents	Total Number of Minority Students Using the Option	Average Percent of White Students in Each District Using the Option
School Board Agreements	69	4,636	340	13%	0-100%[33]	565	5%
Open Enrollment	60	4,204	330	9%	0-100%[34]	283	4%
High School Graduation Incentives	19	5,897	402	3%	0-17%	88	1%
Enrollment Choice	16	9,002	713	1%	0-6%	35	0%
Tuition Agreements	3	1,471	180	3%	0-7%	8	0%
Private Alternative Programs	1	1,557	24	4%	---	1	0%

Source: MDE School District Options Report by Ethnicity (1990-91, 1991-91). Data do not include the Twin Cities.

[33] The 100 percent represents a district which has only one minority student enrolled, and that student is enrolled through Open Enrollment.

[34] The 100 percent represents a district which has only one minority student enrolled, and that student is enrolled through a School Board Agreement.

Question 3a: Are minority students living in Minneapolis and St. Paul using the choice options? Have there been changes in the numbers of minority students using these choice options?

Of the five enrollment options that allow students and their parents to choose a specific school, only Open Enrollment experienced an increase in minority participation between 1990-91 and 1991-92 in these two urban areas. Minority participation in the other options was varied. Again, data for minority participation in Within-District Choice, Area Learning Centers, Postsecondary Enrollment Options, and Public Alternative Programs were not available. In addition, data for minority participation in Private Alternative Programs were not available for 1991-92; therefore, we can not examine trends in minority participation for these programs. See Table 8 for minority participation in the other choice options/mechanisms.

Minneapolis: Minority student enrollments through Open Enrollment increased substantially, from two students in 1990-91 to 207 students in 1991-92. In 1991-92, minority students accounted for approximately 43 percent of all Minneapolis students--both minority and non-minority--who used Open Enrollment. Although this number represents only 1 percent of all minority students in the district, the same proportion of white students (1 percent) also used Open Enrollment. The dramatic change in use of the statewide Open Enrollment Option by Minneapolis students between 1990-91 and 1991-92 is the result of a policy change by the school district. In the earliest years of Open Enrollment's implementation, Minneapolis school district policy prohibited minority students from using Open Enrollment to enter the district because increased minority student enrollments would affect racial balance in the schools. By 1991-92, the district had amended this policy to allow all students the opportunity to transfer in or out under Open Enrollment. In 1990-91, approximately three-quarters (74 percent) of the students enrolled in Private Alternative Programs were minority students (645 students), accounting for 3 percent of the Minneapolis minority student population overall; 1 percent of the district's white population are enrolled in these programs. The Private Alternative Programs are for students at risk of dropping out of school. Several have an ethnocentric focus that may account for the overrepresentation of minority students in these programs. Data for 1991-92 were not available so we cannot determine trends. Minority student use of other choice mechanisms for which we have data during the two years was minimal.

Table 8: Minority Enrollments by Choice Option/Mechanism for Minnesota's Urban Districts: 1990-91 and 1991-92[35]

Metro Area Districts	Open Enrollment		High School Graduation Incentives		School Board Agreements		Enrollment Choice		Private Alternative Programs	
	1990	1991	1990	1991	1990	1991	1990	1991	1990	1991
Minneapolis[36]										
# of Students	2	207	0	4	2	7	0	15	645	n/a
% of Minority Population	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	n/a
St. Paul[37]										
# of Students	115	213	5	1	16	n/a	17	14	69	n/a
% of Minority Population	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	n/a	0%	0%	0%	n/a

Source: MDE School District Options Report by Ethnicity (1990-91, 1991-92).

** No students in these metropolitan districts used Tuition Agreements or Public Alternative Programs.

St. Paul: As mentioned in Question 1a, comparable data for St. Paul between 1990-91 and 1991-92 were not available for this report. However, we can establish general trends for minority students enrolling through the various choice options. Among all the choice options, Open Enrollment accounted for the largest number of minority student enrollments (115) in 1990-91 and increased by approximately 85 percent to more than 200 students by 1991-92. These numbers represent 1 percent of the St. Paul minority student population; the same proportion of white students in the district also used Open Enrollment. Use of the other programs in St. Paul for which we have data is minimal.

---

[35] In 1991-92, St. Paul was late in reporting student participation, by option, to the state. For this reason, the 1990-91 and 1991-92 data do not come from the same sources, and may not be a perfect match. The 1990-91 data are a headcount taken at the beginning of the school year; the 1991-92 data are the average daily attendance for the year. These numbers should be considered an estimate of general trends in program use.

[36] Total minority enrollment was 21,243 for 1990-91 and 22,249 for 1991-92.

[37] Total minority enrollment was 15,594 for 1990-91 and 15,484 for 1991-92.

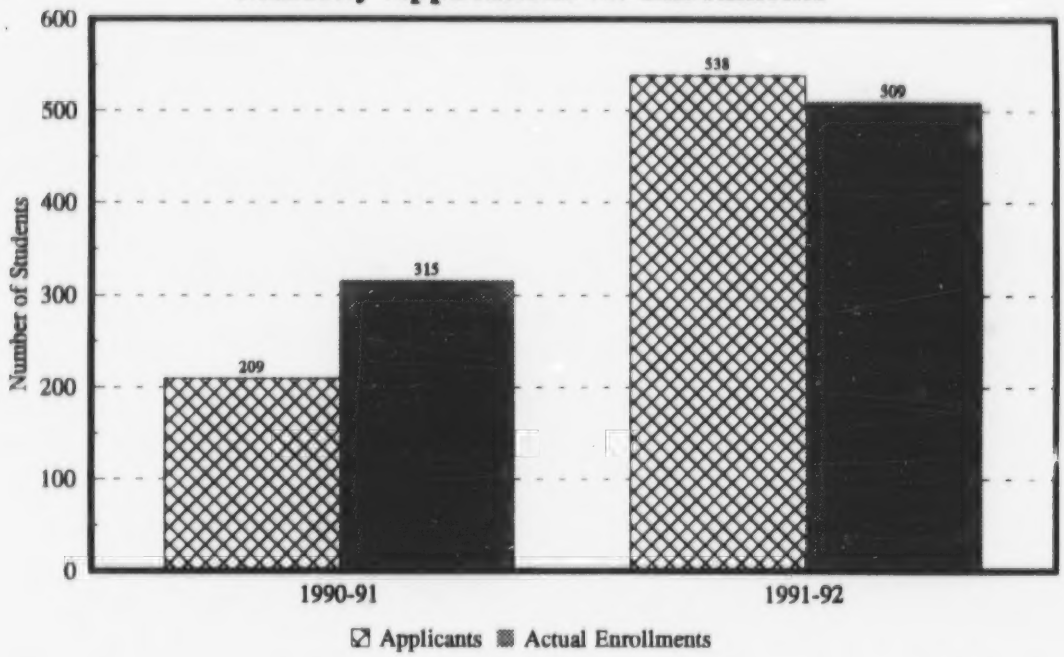
Question 4: Do minority students who apply to use the Open Enrollment Option actually use it?[38]

The racial/ethnic background of students applying to use the Open Enrollment Option generally reflects their statewide representation in the school-age population. In 1989-90, approximately 94 percent of students who applied to transfer under Open Enrollment reported their race/ethnicity as "White," and the remaining 6 percent reported their race/ethnicity as African American (1 percent), Hispanic (1 percent), Native American (2 percent), and Asian (2 percent). By 1990-91 and 1991-92, the proportion of minority applications to transfer through Open Enrollment had increased to 8 percent of all applications (2 percent for each race/ethnic population) compared with a 10 percent total minority student population statewide. This increase may be due to a number of factors: (1) an increase in minority use of Open Enrollment in the Twin Cities due to the relaxing of the desegregation restrictions; (2) increased marketing and assistance through the state-monitored Options Hotline; and (3) an increase in available information on schools in other districts and on the Open Enrollment application process.

Because students who apply to enroll in another district through Open Enrollment do not necessarily complete the transfer, it is important to ask: **How many minority applicants for Open Enrollment actually enroll in a nonresident district the following year?** Although the present data do not allow for longitudinal monitoring of individual students, it is possible to monitor cohorts of student applicants by matching the applications data for 1989-90 and 1990-91 with district-level data on actual enrollments for 1990-91 and 1991-92. Because applications are made nine months prior to actual enrollment, applications made in 1989-90 are compared with enrollments in 1990-91, and applications made in 1990-91 are compared with enrollments in 1991-92. Figure 1 displays the totals for minority applications and enrollments for each cohort.

[38] These analyses include data from all districts, including the Twin Cities.

Figure 1:
Minority Applications vs. Enrollments



Applications for 1990-91 were made in 1989-90.
Applications for 1991-92 were made in 1990-91

As the figure indicates, fewer minority students applied to transfer through Open Enrollment in 1989-90 than actually transferred. This peculiarity may be due, in part, to the state's data collection methods. Students residing in districts with desegregation plans (e.g., Minneapolis and St. Paul) are not required to abide by the state application deadline. If most of these minority applicants reside in districts under desegregation orders (at least 115 resided in St. Paul), their applications may not have been received in time to be counted in the 1989-90 application totals. However, they would be counted in the attendance totals in 1990-91. For 1991-92, where the number of applications exceeds the number who actually enrolled, more minority students may have chosen to apply by the state deadline. Another possible explanation is that more minority students outside of Minneapolis and St. Paul may be using the Open Enrollment mechanism; these students would be required to apply by the state deadline and would thus be counted in the total number of applicants. The various glitches in these data limit the conclusions that can be drawn. However, we can say with confidence that, over a three-year period, the number of actual minority enrollments through Open Enrollment increased by nearly 200 students or 62 percent.

Appendix Table 1: Correlation of Enrollment Options with District Characteristics: 1990-91 and 1991-92[39]

Options	District Characteristics, 1990-91[40]			District Characteristics, 1991-92		
	Size	Urbanicity	FRPL	Size	Urbanicity	FRPL
Open Enrollment	-.15*	.11*	.11*	-.15*	.12*	.17*
School Board Agreements	-.05	.04	.09	-.06	.05	-.05
Post Secondary Enrollment Options	-.01	.05	.16*	-.01	.01	.04
High School Graduation Incentives	.17*	.02	-.03	.16*	.02	-.07
Within-District Choice	.33*	-.27*	-.08	.31*	-.23*	-.0[illegible]
Private Alternative Programs	.02	-.02	-.04	-.03	.04	.01
ENR Choice	.08	-.13*	-.03	.09	-.12*	-.12*
Tuition Agreements	-.08	.08	.07	-.06	.06	.02
Area Learning Centers	.19*	.01	.07	.17*	.01	.07
Public Alternative Education Programs	.07	.08	.00	.20*	.06	-.01

Note: An asterisk (*) indicates statistical significance at less than the .05 alpha level.

[39] Correlation coefficients may range in value from -1.00 to +1.00. Negative one (-1.00) indicates a perfect inverse relationship between two variables, +1.00 indicates a perfect positive relationship between two variables, and 0 indicates the absence of a relationship/ Coefficients that approach -1.00 or +1.00 indicate strong relationships while coefficients that approach 0 indicate weak relationships.

[40] Correlations are based on the 356 districts which had students using at least one of the choice options during both 1990-91 and 1991-92.

REFERENCES

Adelman, N. (1992). Minnesota's educational options for at-risk youth: Urban alternative schools and area learning centers. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates.

Funkhouser, J. E., & Colopy, K. W. (Forthcoming). Minnesota's open enrollment option: Impacts on school districts. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates.

Malone, M., Nathan, J., & Sedio, D. (1993). Facts, figures, and faces: A look at Minnesota's school choice programs. Minneapolis, MN: Center for School Change, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.

Minnesota Department of Education. Unpublished tabulations, 1989-92.

Rubenstein, M. C., Hamar, R., & Adelman, N. E. (1992). Minnesota's open enrollment option. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates.